

Achoiring Voices



Risk Assessment in relation to COVID-19 for Choir Rehearsals

Venue: Romsey Methodist Church,
The Hundred, Romsey SO51 8BZ

Areas used: Side Entrance & Toilet.
Church Sanctuary.
Main entrance lobby, toilet, and kitchen

Isolation area: Main entrance lobby

Assessment by: Joe Nurse
Assessment date: 11th August 2020
Updated: 11th October 2020
Review date: 11th December 2020

Introduction:

The Coronavirus-19 is a highly infectious disease primarily affecting the respiratory system. The disease can be transmitted as an aerosol from human exhalation/inhalation or by physical contact with an infected surface or person. The disease can be transmitted prior to an infected person exhibiting symptoms. From information provided by the UK Research & Innovation website, surfaces can remain infected between 24 hours (cardboard) to 72 hours (plastics & stainless steel). In the form of an aerosol (i.e. a fine mist) 50% of the virus will settle out onto a surface in about an hour, whereas the remainder may remain in the air for about 3- 4 hours. It is understood that transmission of the virus likely occurs mainly indoors and in settings where there is poor ventilation and close proximity between people.

Description of Activity:

Prior to the pandemic of Covid-19 Achoiring Voices would run weekly community choir rehearsals lasting 1.5 hours.

Upon arrival at each venue, choir members (and occasionally visitors for trial sessions), would help themselves and/or receive refreshments of tea, coffee and biscuits. Typically, cash payment was taken from individual choir members by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse prior to beginning of each rehearsal. The preparation and leadership of each event is undertaken by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse. Achoiring Voices seek to reinstate this activity, and where required, extend the rehearsal running time required to run smaller group rehearsals, in line with Government Guidelines and other practical considerations. It should be noted that these events are Rehearsals only – no audience will be in attendance.

Persons at risk:

These are primarily: -

- The Musical Director, Joe Nurse providing the preparation and leadership of the activity.
- Individual volunteers who help support and facilitate the practical running of rehearsals (i.e. preparing refreshments, positioning seating)
- Members of Achoiring Voices who attend choir rehearsals.
- Members of the respective church communities that may use the same entrance to the buildings for other purposes. (Achoiring voices has exclusive use of the space hired within the building)

Nature & Likelihood of hazard:

The probability of infection is highly related to the current prevalence of the disease in the community. The probability of infection within each Achoiring Voices event maybe associated with contact infection and aerosol transmission, both for those leading and supporting rehearsals as well as participating choir members.

Severity of Hazard:

The severity of the infection primarily varies with age, gender, ethnicity, obesity and any underlying co-morbidity. The severity is increased with age; being male; being from a Black-Asian-Minority Ethnic group; being obese; having co-morbidities and for those people who are required to clinically shield. See:-

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf Children appear to be the least affected from the infection.

Level of risk:

Without further demographic or clinical information, it is assumed that all persons attending an event are at the same level of high risk of infection without control measures, and that all mitigation measures apply to everyone.

Mitigation and control of risks:

- i) Achoiring Voices rehearsals operate under the arrangements approved by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse and if the prevalence of the disease in the community rises and is unacceptable rehearsals will be cancelled at any time. Regular monitoring of cases in the local community will be undertaken using <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51768274>.
- ii) The *social distance* is 2 meters.
- iii) The Musical Director, Joe Nurse and any individual volunteers supporting the running of rehearsals must use the personal protective equipment provided (i.e. face shields, surgical masks and disposable gloves). Ref. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>]
- iv) Everyone attending the premises will comply with the signage and other instructions in order to minimise the risk of infection and/or the transmission of the virus.
- v) Personal greetings such as handshaking, hugs, etc are firmly discouraged.
- vi) Entry to the venue will be via the main front doors at the top of the steps. A *social distance* must be maintained between individuals whilst waiting to enter and also within the building. Signage will be located outside and inside the building indicating the *social distance* between individuals.
- vii) Entry to and exit from the building will be controlled by an individual volunteer supporting the running of rehearsal and may make enquiry should the health of a person entering the venue be a concern. No person will be admitted to the building if they are Covid-19 symptomatic.
- viii) All doors relating to thoroughfares will remain open so as to minimise door handles being touched whilst facilitating ventilation, and thereby reducing the transmission of the virus. Multiple air purifiers, which destroy airborne viruses and bacteria, will be evenly spaced throughout the rehearsal space and switched on full action for the duration of the session, in order to allow the main front doors to remain closed.
- ix) Everyone attending the rehearsal will use hand sanitiser upon entry.
- x) All persons attending the rehearsal will have attendance and contact details registered in order to facilitate tracing should that be necessary as part of a public health requirement. All registers will be held for a minimum of 21 days and destroyed within 2 years following attendance.
- xi) Personal items should not be left in the building.
- xii) Items belonging to the venue should not be removed.
- xiii) Sanitising wipes are provided in toilets so that users may clean handles, switches, etc. after use. The wipes are to be disposed within the bins provided.
- xiv) Choir members will be requested to be self-sufficient with tissues, pens, pre-filled water bottles etc. and will be reminded not to touch, handle, replace or share objects (e.g. pens, pencils, books, sheet

- music etc) that might aid the transmission of the virus. Sheet music will be sent via email to participants prior to the rehearsal.
- xv) A sanitiser will be available for use at each entrance and exit of the building.
 - xvi) The service of refreshments upon arrival will be suspended to simplify the return of rehearsals. Members are encouraged to bring their own drinks.
 - xvii) The minimum distance between chairs in their normal seated position shall be the *social distance*. All chairs will face the same direction. Chairs must not be rearranged by participants once set out.
 - xviii) A booking system will be used to manage attendance capacity. Maximum number of participants in each session to be 30. Booking will confirm arrival and departure times – with maximum time per rehearsal group of 1.5 hours [including arrival and departure]
 - xix) A thoroughfare will be maintained for the purposes of providing an easy exit for participants whilst maintaining a *social distance*.
 - xx) The chairs shall be sanitised by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse and an individual volunteer using disposable paper towels/cloths prior, between and after use by participants.
 - xxi) A notice will be placed outside each venue requesting participants to wear a *face covering* on entry to the building and until seated, and to wear the *face covering* when leaving their chair.
 - xxii) At the time of entry, participants will be welcomed and general enquiry made about their health. If a person appears to be unwell or not wearing a *face covering* then entry will be refused.
 - xxiii) A surgical face mask may be given to those people arriving without a *face covering*.
 - xxiv) Participants will be advised to use the hand sanitiser and the name and contact details for each participant will be checked alongside the online booking system by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse or individual volunteer for the purposes of registration.
 - xxv) Payment for rehearsals will be taken individually by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse using Contactless payment. Spaces to attend rehearsals will be booked in advance using the Achoiring Voices website, where choir members will upload their contact details for tracing.
 - xxvi) The Musical Director, Joe Nurse will wear a face shield when checking contact details and receiving payment.
 - xxvii) Cash payments will be discouraged in preference of the new online booking system and contactless payment system. If any choir member is unable to pay using Contactless, they may be requested to pay by alternative means (i.e. cheque payments for larger amounts less often).
 - xxviii) Participants will be advised of the conditions including where they should sit and will be requested to continue to wear their face covering until advised by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse at the start of the rehearsal. They will also be requested to use a *face covering* on exit from the building, or at any other time (e.g. using toilet) when leaving the chair.
 - xxix) A screen will be placed between the Musical Director, Joe Nurse and participants during rehearsals. Music to accompany the choir will be produced by Joe Nurse using his PC for backing tracks or his electronic keyboard.
 - xxx) Participants should remain at their chair during their time at the rehearsal event and may only relocate to another chair with approval from the Musical Director and provided it has been sanitised by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse or individual volunteer. Once a chair has been vacated it shall not be occupied by another participant until the chair has been sanitised. Changing locations is likely to result in social distancing to be reduced and participants should be encouraged to wear a *face covering*.
 - xxxi) Parents/carers should ensure supervision of children at all times. Note that there will be no resources for children to use; parents/carers should bring and remove any resources for their children.
 - xxxii) If a person is taken poorly during the event they shall be asked to immediately leave. If this is not possible, they will be isolated by the Musical Director, Joe Nurse or individual volunteer wearing protective gloves and surgical mask. A surgical mask and protective gloves may be given to the affected person. The person should remain isolated until it is safe to exit the building without further contact of others. All other areas where the person was sitting will be sanitised. A note against the name of the person will be made on the registration sheet. In the event of a more complex condition

emergency services should be contacted. In the event of a person being isolated the partition doors will be closed. Those attending the rehearsal will be directed to use the side door when exiting the building.

- xxxiii) Rehearsals will be split into smaller groups to ensure Social Distancing. A clear temporal and spatial distinction between groups arriving and leaving will be maintained with a minimum time between sessions of 1 hour [departure and arrival].
- xxxiv) The Musical Director, Joe Nurse and individual volunteer will sanitise tables, chairs and major contact points before the first rehearsal session, between rehearsal sessions, and after the event has finished.
- xxxv) The Musical Director, Joe Nurse will brief the individual volunteer regarding the processes and procedures for the event, and the volunteer shall have read the risk assessment.
- xxxvi) In the event of fire, all fire safety measures take precedence.

This Risk Assessment plus further guidance in the form of emails, noticeboards, notice sheets, website etc. will be communicated to those wishing to attend the venue for the Achoiring Voices rehearsals. By registering, those attending rehearsals agree and will be required to follow the mitigation measures to ensure safety.